



CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ENCOURAGES FLU VACCINATION

HICKORY, NC – In response to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Advisory regarding increased influenza A (H1N1)-associated illness among young and middle-aged adults, Catawba County Public Health is encouraging individuals to visit their medical provider for a flu shot.

Public Health is also reminding the community of important ways to prevent and treat the flu, such as the following:

- Get vaccinated. The flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu, and it is still widely available from physicians and pharmacies in Catawba County.
- Things you can do every day to help prevent illness include washing your hands frequently, sneezing or coughing into your elbow or a tissue, and avoiding crowds.
- If you think you are getting sick or are experiencing flu-like symptoms, see your doctor.
- If your doctor provides you medication to treat the flu, take it.

“The best defense against the flu is vaccination,” said Doug Urland, director, Catawba County Public Health. “Flu season typically peaks during January and February, making now the time for individuals to prioritize getting their flu shot from their doctor or other flu shot provider.”

Public Health has a limited supply of state flu vaccine available for free to eligible individuals, including:

- Children 6 months through 18 years of age who have Medicaid or no insurance
- Women with Family Planning Waiver coverage
- Uninsured women 19 years and older who are pregnant during flu season and are being served by Catawba County Public Health, including the on-site Prenatal Clinic operated by Catawba Valley Medical Center Maternity Services

For people 65 and older, the high-dose vaccine is available for \$38.00 and the pneumonia vaccine is available for \$70.00. Accepted forms of payment include cash, check, debit/credit, Medicare Part B (only), and Medicaid.

Medicare Advantage and other insurance plans will not be accepted; however, individuals with these healthcare coverage options may pay and then file with their insurers for possible reimbursement.

Vaccinations will be available by appointment only and can be made by calling (828) 695-5800.

The CDC recommends anyone 6 months or older get the flu vaccine. The vaccination is highly recommended for individuals who are at a higher risk for flu related complications including:

- Anyone with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or chronic lung disease
- Pregnant women
- People 65 years or older
- Caregivers, especially those individuals caring for infants or people with health complications

Seasonal influenza is an illness that can cause serious health complications, including death. While annual

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vaccination is the best tool for prevention of influenza and its complications, treatment with antiviral drugs is an important second line of defense for those who become ill.

Located off Fairgrove Church Road behind Catawba Valley Medical Center in Hickory, N.C., Catawba County Public Health provides health and education services to eligible men, women, and children in the community. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth.

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